

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAJ-01 /067 W

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R 031724Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 578

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: ARIAS TAKES INITIATIVE ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

SUMMARY: IN TV SPEECH TO NATION DEC 2, PREMIER ARIAS INFORMED SPANIARDS THAT POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS STATUE HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO NATIONAL COUNCIL AND WOULD BE APPROVED, AS PROMISED, BEFORE END OF YEAR. HE APPEALED TO NATION TO SUPPORT PROJECT EVEN IF IT DID NOT CORRESPOND ENTIRELY TO ASPIRATIONS OF ALL GROUPS AS REPRESENTING FIRST STEP IN ROAD TOWARDS DEMOCRATIZING SYSTEM AND WHICH COULD BE PERFECTED ON THE WAY. GOS TURNED OVER DRAFT TEXT APPROVED IN PRESIDENCY AND BY FRANCO TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MOVEMENT SAME DAY. PRINCIPAL FEATURES INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS WITHIN NATIONAL MOVEMENT WHICH COULD HAVE PROGRAMS (PLATFORMS) AND TAKE PART IN ELECTIONS ACCORDING TO ORGANIC SYSTEM. TIMING OF ARIAS' TV APPEARANCE AND RELEASE OF DRAFT TEXT CAME ON CREST OF WAVE OF NEW SUPPORT FOR PREMIER FROM MEDIA, SIGNIFICANT CAUCUS IN CORTES, AND INDIRECT MORAL SUPPORT

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OF CHURCH HIERARCHY FOR LIBERALIZATION OF POLITICAL SYSTEM, ALL

OF WHICH HAS HELPED ARIAS TO RECOUP SOME LOSS OF PRESTIGE WHICH HE SUFFERED IN MINISTERIAL CRISIS EARLY IN NOV. ARIAS HAS KEPT POLITICAL PROMISES MADE IN INAUGURAL SPEECH FEB 12 AND EVEN IF HE HAS HAD TO TACK TO VARIOUS PRESSURES FROM RIGHT AND FROM FRANCO, HE HAS MAINTAINED BASIC COURSE DESIGNED TO UPDATE SPAIN'S POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS TO CONFORM WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN PAST TWO DECADES. END SUMMARY

1. PREMIER ARIAS NAVARRO MADE TV APPEARANCE LATE DEC 2 TO DESCRIBE BASIC PROJECT ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS WHICH WAS SUBMITTED IN DRAFT THE SAME DAY TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MOVEMENT. AFTER REVIEWING HIS EFFORTS SINCE ASSUMING POWER EARLY 1974 TO CARRY OUT HIS PROMISES CONTAINED IN HIS PROGRAMATIC SPEECH OF FEB 12, ARIAS WENT ON TO DISCUSS AT LENGTH BACKGROUND AND FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF KEY DRAFT DESIGNED TO PERMIT POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS. HE PAID TRIBUTE TO MEDIA, POLITICIANS, AND POLITICAL COMMENTATORS FOR DISCUSSIONS HELD IN PAST FEW MONTHS CONCERNING PROPOSED LEGISLATION ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT FOR SOME NEW DRAFT WOULD PROBABLY BE TOO LIBERAL WHEREAS FOR OTHERS IT WOULD NOT BE LIBERAL ENOUGH. ARIAS APPEALED TO SPANIARDS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PATIENCE, REALIZING THAT PROPOSED STEP WAS ONLY FIRST ONE IN A PROCESS WHICH COULD BE PERFECTED IN THE COURSE OF THE JOURNEY. HE DESCRIBED THE GOAL AS "NATIONAL CONSENSUS, WHICH COULD BE REACHED ONLY BE SUCCESSIVE STEPS TAKEN WITH "FIRMNESS AND SECURITY". PROPOSED STATUTE WOULD ALLOW SCOPE FOR VARIOUS OPINIONS AS LONG AS THEY WERE MOTIVATED BY RESPECT OF FUNDAMENTAL LAWS. ARIAS APPEALED ESPECIALLY TO SPAIN'S YOUTH REMINDING THEM THAT OTHER GENERATIONS, AT ONE TIME YOUNG, HAD INHERITED SPAIN IN A DIFFERENT CONDITION AND CONTRIBUTED BY THEIR SACRIFICE TO GIVE RESPONSE WHICH AT THAT TIME WAS RIGHT ONE.

2. ARIAS SAID THAT HE PROPOSED TO CONSOLIDATE HISTORICAL LEGACY DESCRIBED "AS FRANCO'S PEACE" TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION "THE RADICAL CHANGES IN SPANISH SOCIETY". HE ALLUDED TO SPAIN'S "TROUBLED HISTORY, WHICH DEMONSTRATED THAT ALMOST ALWAYS A SPECTACULAR CHANGE ENDED UP BY BEING RETROGRESSIVE" WHEREAS A SURE, STEADY, AND SLOW PACE WAS ACTUALLY THE MORE EFFECTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAY OF MAKING CHANGES. IT WAS ESSENTIAL, HE SAID, TO PRESERVE "THE SPANISH PEACE" AS A TRIBUTE AND HOMAGE TO THE EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP OF FRANCO. THE PROPOSED STATUTE WAS A CONTRIBUTION TO CONSOLIDATION OF "DEMOCRATIC PROCESS OF THE NATION" WHICH WOULD ONE DAY BE LED BY PRINCE JUAN CARLOS. HE ASKED SPANIARDS TO TRUST HIM AND SHOW FAITH IN HIS MODERATION AND PRUDENCE IN HIS EFFORT TO CONSTRUCT "FUTURE POLITICAL PLURALISM".

3. ARIAS LEFT SUBSTANCE OF PROPOSED STATUTE TO BE COVERED IN SEPARATE PRESS INTERVIEW GIVEN BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND TOURISM SAME DAY. ACTUAL DRAFT STATUTE WAS NOT MADE PUBLIC BUT MINISTER DESCRIBED ITS MAIN FEATURES AS FOLLOWS: (A) SPANIARDS 18 YEARS AND OLDER WOULD HAVE RIGHT TO ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FREELY; (B) ASSOCIATIONS COULD TAKE PART IN ELECTORAL PROCESS ON BASIS OF ORGANIC SYSTEM; (C) THEY WOULD BE INSTITUTED WITHIN THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT WHOSE NATIONAL COUNCIL WOULD DECIDE ON THEIR RECOGNITION AND REGISTRATION; (D) GOVT WILL CARRY OUT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AGAINST ASSOCIATIONS AND COULD SUSPEND THEIR ACTIVITIES FOR MAXIMUM OF SIX MONTHS FOR REASONS OF PUBLIC ORDER, NATIONAL DEFENSE, OR EMERGENCY; (E) 25 PEOPLE COULD REQUEST CONSTITUTION OF AN ASSOCIATION BUT APPROVAL WOULD ONLY BE MADE OF THOSE WHICH ARE ABLE TO MUSTER 25,000 MEMBERS DISTRIBUTED PROPORTIONATELY IN 15 PROVINCES; (F) NATIONAL MOVEMENT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO FINANCING ALL THE ASSOCIATIONS; (G) STATUTE WOULD NOT BE APPLICABLE TO NATIONAL MOVEMENT'S OWN ORGANIZATIONS OR ITS SPECIAL ASSOCIATIONS; AND (H) WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF FUNDAMENTAL LAWS ASSOCIATIONS WOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO FORMULATE MEANS AND PROGRAMS (PLATFORMS) ORIENTED TO THE SERVICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY.

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4. COMMENT: ARIAS MADE A VERY GOOD IMPRESSION WITH HIS TV APPEARANCE. HE SPOKE WITH ASSURANCE, CONVICTION, AND SERIOUSNESS AND CONVEYED SOMETHING OF THE HUMBLENESS WHICH MADE HIM A POPULAR MAYOR OF MADRID AND COULD ASSIST HIM IN FURTHER DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PROFILE. SEVERAL OPPOSITION REPS TOLD EMBOFF THAT PREMIER'S STYLE WAS TOTALLY NEW AND, ON BALANCE, VERY APPEALING TO SPANISH PEOPLE. TIMING OF HIS SPEECH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER. MEDIA, PARTICULARLY COMMENTATORS, HAVE TENDED IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS TO GIVE ARIAS INCREASING CREDIT FOR HAVING SURMOUNTED A VERY DIFFICULT MINISTERIAL CRISIS IN EARLY NOVEMBER. HE HAS BEEN MADE TO LOOK AS IF HE WERE A WINNER, EVEN IF HE HAD TO GIVE GROUND TOWARD PRESSURES FOR REMOVAL OF TWO MINISTERS IDENTIFIED WITH A MORE LIBERAL APPROACH IN POLITICS. COMMENTATORS, MANY OF THEM WELL-KNOWN SUPPORTERS OF LIBERLIZATION, HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE REALISM BY CREDITING ARIAS FOR HAVING SAVED WHAT COULD BE SAVED OF A MORE LIBERAL LAW ON ASSOCIATIONS WHICH WAS ALLEGEDLY MADE MORE RESTRICTIVE BY BRANCO IN A LAST MINUTE CHANGE. SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS, THEREFORE, HAVE

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SAID THAT COUNTRY SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE INITIAL STEP AND SUPPORT ARIAS IN HIS PROGRAM EVEN IF IT DID NOT MEET ALL THEIR EXPECTATIONS. A WEEKEND MEETING OF OVER 50 PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE CORTES, ALL OF THEM REPRESENTING DEPUTIES ELECTED DIRECTLY BY HEADS OF FAMILY, ALSO ENDORSED ARIAS ALTHOUGH SOME MEMBERS OF GROUP WOULD HAVE PREFERRED MUCH MORE LIBERAL DRAFT STATUTE ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHERS A LESS LIBERAL STATUTE. THIS UNUSUAL CAUCUS INCLUDED SOME MEMBERS OF THE "TACITO" GROUP WHICH HAD SHARPLY ATTACKED GOVT FOR THE MINISTERIAL CHANGES MADE IN EARLY NOV AND WILL REPORTEDLY MEET IN NEXT 48 HOURS TO DECIDE ON ITS ATTITUDE TO DRAFT STATUTE. PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THIS CAUCUS, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ARIAS' CURRENT EFFORTS HAVE INJECTED ELEMENT OF POLITICAL REALISM AMONG MEMBERS OF THIS CAUCUS, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR ARIAS' CURRENT EFFORTS HAVE INJECTED ELEMENT OF POLITICAL REALISM AMONG MEMBERS OF LIBERAL GROUPS WHO NOW BELIEVE THAT PREMIER IS DOING WHAT IS FEASIBLE TO DEMOCRATIZE COUNTRY AT REGULAR AND STEADY PACE. A WEEKEND PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE ALSO ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE DEC 1 IN WHICH IT EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR CHANNELS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION WITHOUT ARBITRARY DISCRIMINATIONS AND WITH JURIDICAL GUARANTEES OF MEMBERS. COMMUNIQUE, IN EFFECT, ADDED SIGNIFICANT MORAL SUPPORT TO

THRUST OF ARIAS' PROGRAM. PREMIER, THEREFORE, WOULD SEEM TO HAVE PARTLY REGAINED INITIATIVE IN CONTINUING WITH PROGRAM WHICH HE ANNOUNCED FEB 12 DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT GRADUAL DEMOCRATIZATION OF SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM.

5. ARIAS SPEECH AND HIS FULFILLMENT OF THIRD ELEMENT IN HIS FEB 12 PROGRAM HAS GIVEN NEW BOOST TO HIS ADMINISTRATION IN PRESENT POLITICAL JUNCTURE. ONLY A WEEK AGO, AT TIME OF ARREST OF 13 REPS OF OPPOSITION GROUPS, MANY POLITICAL OBSERVERS FELT THAT GOVT WAS LOSING GROUND UNDER PRESSURE OF RIGHT WING AND OTHER OPPONENTS OF GRADUAL LIBERLIZATION. MANY HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN COMMENTS BY KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT MOVEMENT'S ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OCT 29 TAKING TRADITIONALIST POLITICAL LINE OPPOSED TO POLITICAL PLURALISM. OTHERS HAVE NOTED ESTABLISHMENT TWO WEEKS AGO OF RIGHT WING NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF VETERANS BY ANTONIO GIRON DE VELASCO, A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF FRANCO WHO IN EFFECT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BROUGHT TOGETHER A NUMBER OF VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS IN FIRST AND PRESENTLY LARGEST POLITICAL PRESSURE GROUP IN SPAIN (AIRGRAM FOLLOWS). OTHER RIGHT WING SPOKESMEN IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE ALSO QUESTIONED IDEA OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, PARTICULARLY THEIR PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS. ARIAS SEEMS TO HAVE AT LEAST WON POINT ON LATTER ISSUE BUT TO HAVE LOST GROUND, HOWEVER, WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCESS TO NORMAL JUDICIAL PROCEDURES FOR INFRACTIONS BY SUCH ASSOCIATIONS, CONSIDERED A KEY FEATURE BY MANY POLITICAL COMMENTATORS.

6. THE DRAFT STATUTE ITSELF HAS MANY DRAWBACKS AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE ATTACKED BY ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION, BUT IT REPRESENTS A FIRST STEP. ARIAS A FIRST STEP. ARIAS SAID IN HIS SPEECH IT WAS GOOD "FOR THE PRESENT TIME" SUGGESTING PERHAPS THAT IT COULD BE MODIFIED UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, PRESUMABLY THE DEMISE OF FRANCO, AT WHICH TIME PRIME MINISTER AUTOMATICALLY BECOMES HEAD OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT.  
EATON

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